



Lincoln Elementary in Ventura has won the **Recycle Rex Statewide Recycle Challenge** for the past three years. The school's winning California Redemption Value (CRV) container counts are as follows: 2008: 25,904. 2009: 37,587. 2010: 45,197. What are the secrets to Lincoln's success?

At Lincoln Elementary, every day is recycling day. As soon as a student has a full bag of recyclable CRV containers, he or she brings it to school. Families don't have to separate cans from bottles. Since the inception of the school's recycling program, the City of Ventura has provided the school with a recycling storage shed. Parents who collect and transport large volumes have keys to the shed, so they can drop off recycling at all hours, on weekends, and during holidays. Bags of containers left in front of the shed by other families are happily deposited by the key-holders.

Parent Gordon Myers started the school's recycling program, devoting time and money to its promotion, the collection and storage of the recyclable containers, and for a long time was the sole person who transported the empties to a recycling center to claim the CRV refunds. Mr. Myers eventually started an ongoing partnership between the school and a local recycling center that services the recycling storage shed on a moment's notice. The center's staff load the truck with the recyclables, without assistance from parents or school staff. The center's staff sort the comingled recycling at their facility, deduct 10 percent for pick up and sorting, and the following day have a check ready for pick up, usually between \$300 and \$400.

For every bag of containers brought to the school, students receive a raffle ticket (two raffle tickets for a really big bag). Raffle tickets are colored and each classroom has a different color. The first raffle ticket can be exchanged for a small prize, like a doll key chain. With every seven raffle tickets, students can pick another prize on Fridays. Every few months Lincoln holds a recycling raffle, with cash prizes for ten lucky students. Nine will win \$5, one will win \$20. Everybody wants to be a recycler that day. The sequential numbers on the raffle tickets make it easy to track classroom volumes. After the raffle, the tickets are sorted and each student's total is tallied. Some students have brought in more than 200 bags.

Lincoln Elementary students have become enthusiastic recyclers. If they see a discarded container, they pick it up. If there is no recycling at a birthday party, they ask for a bag and donate the collected containers to the school. They ask their parents to get their places of business involved. They ask their older brothers and sisters to collect containers at their high school football games and donate them. Lincoln Elementary has collected more than 50,000 pounds of recyclable containers since 2005. Recycling pays for Lincoln Elementary art and music programs, and the administration is recruiting more schools to start their own recycling programs. You can read more about Lincoln Elementary's award-winning recycling program [at the school's recycling web site](#).

